

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-03

ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-05 SS-15 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01

SCCT-01 IO-10 AID-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 OC-05 CCO-00 SSO-00

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P 281220Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3473

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON PRIORITY

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN PRIORITY

COMIDEASTFOR PRIORITY

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA PRIORITY

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0644

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MOPS ET

SUBJECT: THE ASMARA SITUATION

REF: ADDIS ABABA 8985

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, CONSIDERABLE FIRING TOOK PLACE IN AND AROUND ASMARA ON FRIDAY, JULY 25 IN THE LATE AFTERNOON AND EARLY EVENING AND AGAIN LATER AT NIGHT. ALTHOUGH, AS I REPORTED, THERE WAS SOME INCOMING FIRE, THE BULK OF THE FIRING WAS DONE BY ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES. THERE HAS BEEN NO FIRING SINCE THE FRIDAY INCIDENTS EXCEPT FOR THE USUAL OCCASIONAL SINGLE SHOTS AT
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NIGHT. ALTHOUGH TENSION IN THE CITY PERSISTED, BOTH AS A RESULT

OF THE FIRING AND BECAUSE OF REPEATED RUMORS THAT THE INSURGENTS ARE STILL PLANNING A MAJOR ATTACK, BY SUNDAY THE CITY WAS SUPERFICIALLY CALM. THERE WAS THE USUAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON THE STREETS, SHOPS WERE OPEN, AND SPORTING EVENTS TOOK PLACE. GOOD WEATHER HELPED.

2. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A NUMBER OF MORE STRINGENT SECURITY REGULATIONS INVOLVING TRAVEL. EFFECTIVE JULY 23, THE USE OF BICYCLES IS PROHIBITED; IT IS PROHIBITED TO VEHICLES IN PUBLIC SERVICE, TRUCKS AND PRIVATE VEHICLES TO MOVE OUT OF THE CITY IN WHICH THE VEHICLES ARE NORMALLY LOCATED; AND IT IS PROHIBITED FOR VEHICLES TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE CITIES EXCEPT IN CONVOY ON THE MAIN ROADS UNDER CONTROL OF THE ARMED FORCES. THESE MEASURES OBVIOUSLY AFFECT THE MOBILITY OF THE POPULATION AND CAN REDUCE TRANSPORTATION OF FOOD AND OTHER GOODS. THEY WILL ALSO AFFECT THE ABILITY OF THE INSURGENTS TO TRAVEL TO AND TO ENTER AND LEAVE THE CITY AS ALL ROADS OUT OF ASMARA HAVE BEEN CLOSED TO NORMAL CIVILIAN TRAFFIC.

3. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND THE MURDERS OF ERITREANS BY THE ETHIOPIAN SECURITY FORCES REPORTEDLY HAVE CONTINUED WITH THE TOTAL ALLEGEDLY HAVING EXCEEDED 60 PERSONS. THE CONSULATE GENERAL HAS SOME INDICATIONS, HOWEVER, THAT THE PACE OF THIS ACTIVITY IS SLOWING. AMONG OTHER PROTESTS, THE COMMANDO POLICE HAVE REPORTEDLY CONDEMNED THESE ACTIONS AND STRONGLY URGED THE MILITARY TO STOP BEFORE AN UNMANAGEABLE COUNTERREACTION BEGINS. SHERRY

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